

“The Era of Big Government Is Over”: **The 1980s and 1990s** *1980–2000*

Year 3
History Unit 6
Sourcebook

Lessons 1–2: The Reagan Revolution



President Ronald Reagan being sworn in for his second term as president at the U.S. Capitol, January 21, 1985 (Wikimedia)

To what extent was Ronald Reagan's presidency revolutionary?

The Reagan Revolution

The following text was adapted from historian Gil Troy's essay "The Age of Reagan" published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

The "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s tried to change and revive Americans' attitudes after the "malaise" of the 1970s. Ronald Reagan entered the White House in January 1981, promising to restore Americans' faith in their nation and themselves, to shrink "Big Government," and to defend America more aggressively, especially against the Soviet Union. Reagan's goal to restore America brought patriotism, prosperity, and peace to the nation. American pride revived as the economy soared and the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe collapsed. "All in all," Reagan said in his 1989 farewell address, "not bad, not bad at all."

Critics argue that the Reagan Revolution was a reaction against the great liberal gains from the New Deal to the Great Society. They claim Reagan widened the gap between rich and poor, encouraged greed, and threatened the accomplishments of the civil rights, feminist, and environmental movements. The intense debate has continued more than three decades after his election, demonstrating the significance of Reagan's presidency.

As president, Reagan challenged the problems of the 1970s. During that decade, America had seemed lost; the 1970s had been demoralized by the loss of the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal and Richard Nixon's resignation, the Soviet's expansion, an oil shortage, and the economic crisis. Reagan and his fellow conservatives blamed "Big Government," meaning the social programs established by the government, for the domestic troubles. He accused government workers of mismanaging the economy and crushing individual initiative. Reagan conservatives supported "supply side" economics; they believed that cutting taxes and getting rid of regulation would allow Americans to produce—supply—more. Reagan conservatives also blamed government growth on Communism's influence, which made America weak in the fight against the Soviet Union. Even though many conservatives endorsed the Civil Rights Movement, they fought against the negative effects they believed the '60s movements had had on American families and society.

Reagan beat the Democratic President Jimmy Carter in the election of 1980. This became an "ABC" election: "anybody but Carter." He won the electoral college vote 489 to 49 votes, yet won 50.7 percent of popular votes cast, barely the majority. Republicans also captured the Senate for the first time in 30 years, although the House of Representatives remained Democratic.

As president, Reagan promised to cut the budget, reduce taxes, shrink government, revive America, and subdue the Soviets. At his inauguration, he proclaimed, "In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem." During his first seven and a half months in office, Reagan unveiled "Reaganomics," which created the largest budget cut ever and reduced the personal income tax rate by almost one quarter.

In the summer of 1981, Americans were experiencing the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression. Many Democrats attacked the "Reagan Recession." Yet the economy revived before Reagan had to face the electorate for reelection. A 96-month-long economic boom began and ultimately resulted in 20 million new jobs. Inflation dropped from double-digit levels under Carter to 8.9 percent in 1981, then to 4 percent in 1984.

Reagan's second term was rockier than the first. The oldest president ever, he turned 74 shortly after his second inauguration. In 1986, a scandal involving illegal arms shipments to Iran and Central America, along with the Democratic recapture of the Senate, further hurt his popularity and power.

Yet the Reagan Revolution was redeemed as the economic boom continued, pride in America surged, and the Cold War came to a close. In summit meetings with Gorbachev, the new leader of the Soviet Union, Reagan was friendly and flexible. In June 1987, Reagan visited West Berlin and stood at the Berlin Wall, a wall built by the Soviets dividing Soviet East Germany from democratic West Germany during the early years of the Cold War. Reagan demanded, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

Ronald Reagan called his presidency “the great rediscovery”—“a rediscovery of our values and our common sense.” Reagan won a virtual third term, as his vice president, George H. W. Bush, succeeded him.

Promising a “kinder, gentler” nation, President Bush continued Reagan’s revolution with less intensity. Still, Reagan’s anti-government message remained, even in the Democratic administration of Bush’s successor, Bill Clinton. Clinton won reelection in 1996, only after pronouncing that “the era of big government is over” and reforming welfare. For years, many Americans remembered Reagan fondly as the prince of peace and prosperity who restored American pride and patriotism.

Troy, Gil, The Age of Reagan. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Group 1: Reaganomics
Document A
President Reagan: First Inaugural Address

*Ronald Reagan's election to the White House came at a time of great economic and international turmoil for the United States. His first inaugural address on January 20, 1981, highlighted many major issues of the day, including rising inflation and unemployment. Reagan pointed to "**economic affliction**" [pain, suffering, or distress as a result of the economy] as one of the most serious challenges facing the nation, and he asserted a need for the reduction of not just public spending but of the federal government itself.*

The business of our nation goes forward. These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, penalizes **thrift** [*saving money*], and crushes the struggling young and the fixed-income elderly alike. It threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people

We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow. And let there be no misunderstanding -we are going to begin to act, beginning today

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem.

From time to time, we have been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden. The solutions we seek must be equitable, with no one group singled out to pay a higher price.

Reagan, Ronald. January 20, 1981. Courtesy of Reagan Foundation.org.

Document B
Reaganomics

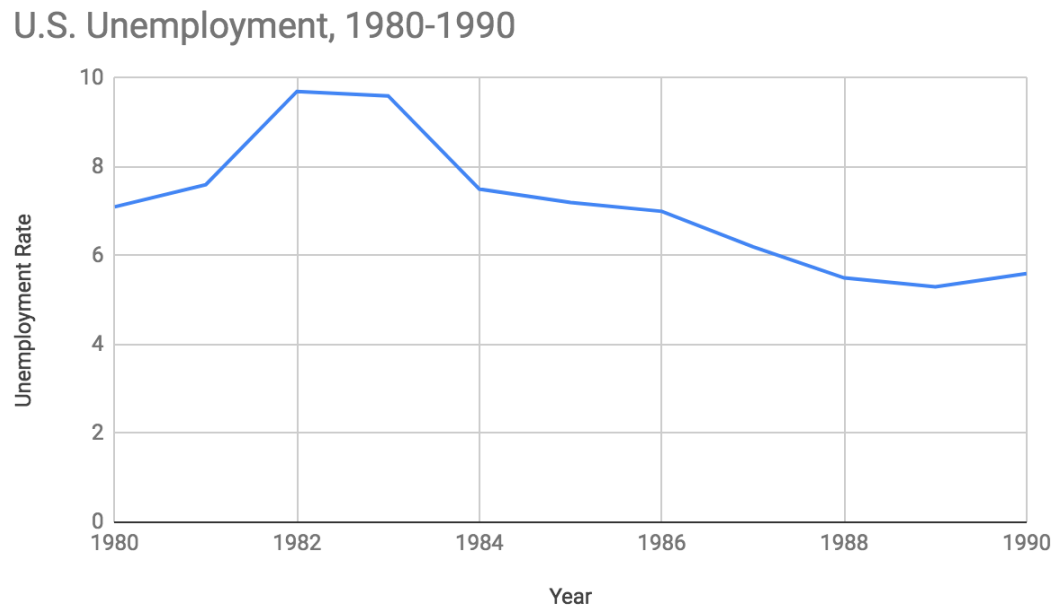
Watch the video Here's Why Reaganomics Is So Controversial on the History Channel website.

Document C

Reaganomics: By the Numbers

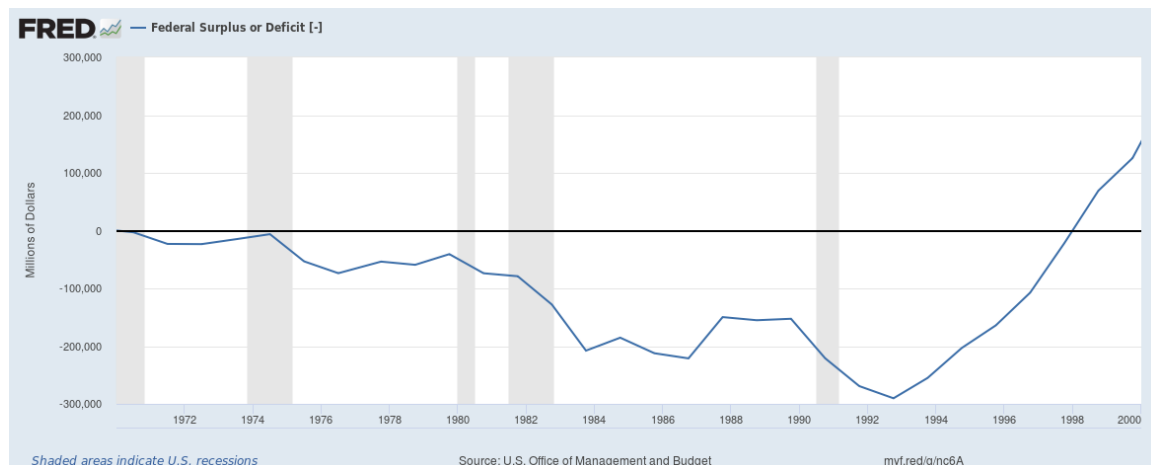
The following graphs show the effects of Reaganomics on unemployment rates, the U.S. budget, and the American people's level of income.

U.S. Unemployment Rates, 1980–1990



Economists are mixed about whether Reaganomics should receive credit for the decrease in unemployment in the mid- to late-1980s. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The U.S. Budget Deficit

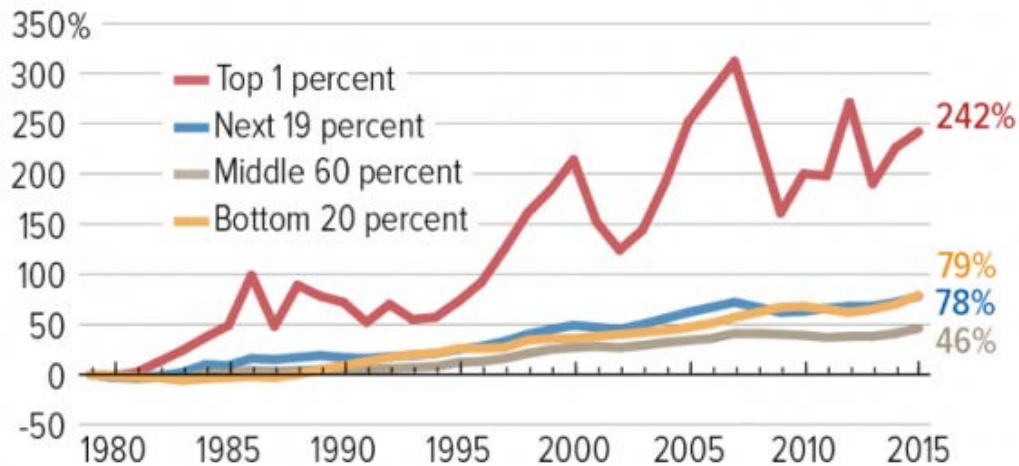


Ronald Reagan cut taxes and cut many U.S. programs, but he did increase U.S. military spending. The U.S. deficit shows how much money the United States spent compared with how much it earned. A deficit means that it spent more than it earned. A surplus means the government earned more money than it spent. This graph illustrates the U.S. government's budget 1970–2000. (Federal Reserve Bank)

Income Levels

Income Gains at the Top Dwarf Those of Low- and Middle-Income Households

Percent change in income after transfers and taxes since 1979



Source: Congressional Budget Office

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG

Throughout much of the middle of the 20th century, incomes tended to grow (or stagnate) at a consistent rate among different wealth groups. This trend changed when Ronald Reagan became president. The chart indicates how much incomes increased for the top 1 percent of wage earners, the next 19 percent of wage earners, the middle 60 percent, and the bottom 20 percent of American workers. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)

Document D

“Down and Out in Paradise” by John Cougar Mellencamp

The song “Down and Out in Paradise” was released in 1987 and performed by popular singer John Cougar Mellencamp. The song addressed the income inequality of the decade as a result of Reagan’s economic policies. Listen to the song “Down and Out in Paradise” by John Cougar Mellencamp on YouTube.

Group 2: The New Right
Document A
The New Right

Read the article “The New Right” on Independence Hall’s USHistory.org website.

Document B
Jerry Falwell: *Listen America!*

Jerry Falwell was a Southern Baptist minister and conservative activist, who founded the Moral Majority in 1979 in response to the perceived rise of socialism and decline of morality in the United States. The Moral Majority combined fundamentalist Christian and conservative Republican rhetoric to appeal to Americans disillusioned by liberalism, and as a result, the Moral Majority became a significant political group in the 1980s and a strong support of President Reagan. Below is an excerpt from Falwell’s book Listen America! published in 1980.

We must reverse the trend America finds herself in today. Young people between the ages of twenty-five and forty have been born and **reared** [*raised*] in a different world than Americans of years past. The television set has been their primary babysitter. From the television set they have learned situation ethics and immorality—they have learned a loss of respect for human life. They have learned to disrespect the family as God has established it. They have been educated in a public school system that is permeated with **secular humanism** [*the belief that humanity is capable of morality and fulfillment without the necessity of God*]. They have been taught that the Bible is just another book of literature They have been introduced to the drug culture. They have been reared by the family and the public school in a society that is greatly void of discipline and character-building They have been taught to believe that the world owes them a living whether they work or not.

I believe that America was built on integrity, on faith in God, and on hard work. I do not believe that anyone has ever been successful in life without being willing to add that last ingredient—diligence or hard work. We now have second- and third-generation **welfare** [*government aid program for those in poverty*] recipients. Welfare is not always wrong. There are those who do need welfare, but we have reared a generation that understands neither the dignity nor the importance of work

Through the ballot box Americans must provide for strong moral leadership at every level It is now time to take a stand on certain moral issues, and we can only stand if we have leaders. We must stand against the **Equal Rights Amendment** [*an amendment pushed by the feminist movement for gender equality*], the feminist revolution, and the homosexual revolution. We must have a revival in this country

Americans must no longer linger in ignorance and **apathy** [*lack of caring*]. We cannot be silent about the sins that are destroying this nation. The choice is ours. We must turn America around or prepare for inevitable destruction. I am listening to the sounds that threaten to take away our liberties in America. And I have listened to God’s admonitions and His direction—the only hopes of saving America. Are you listening too?

Falwell, Jerry. Listen America by Jerry Falwell. 1980. Doubleday, pgs. 17–23.

Group 3: Foreign Policy
Document A
President Reagan's Foreign Policy

Read the article "Ronald Reagan: Foreign Policy" on the Khan Academy website.



*President Reagan meets with aides to discuss the Iran-Contra affair on November 25, 1986.
(Ronald Reagan Library)*

Document B

President Reagan: “Evil Empire Speech”

Like many Americans after World War II, Reagan believed that Soviet Communism posed a threat to American liberty and security. Reagan quickly ended détente policies that had dominated foreign policy in the 1970s, taking a more aggressive approach against the Soviet Union. The text below is an excerpt from President Reagan’s “Evil Empire Speech” delivered March 8, 1983, in Orlando, Florida.

A number of years ago, I heard a young father ... addressing a tremendous gathering in California. It was during the time of the Cold War, and Communism and our own way of life were very much on people’s minds. And he was speaking to that subject. And suddenly, I heard him saying, “I love my little girls more than anything—” And I said to myself, “Oh, no, don’t. You can’t—don’t say that.” But I had underestimated him. He went on: “I would rather see my little girls die now, still believing in God, than have them grow up under Communism and one day die no longer believing in God.” ...

Yes, let us pray for the salvation of all of those who live in that **totalitarian** [*tyrannical, oppressive*] darkness—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its **omnipotence** [*total control*] over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world

If history teaches anything, it teaches that simple-minded appeasement or wishful thinking about our **adversaries** [*enemies*] is **folly** [*foolish, a mistake*]. It means the betrayal of our past, the **squandering** [*crushing*] of our freedom

I urge you to beware the temptation of pride—the temptation of declaring yourselves above it all and labeling both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourself from the struggle between right and wrong and good and evil.

I ask you to resist the attempts of those who would have you withhold your support for our efforts, this administration’s efforts, to keep America strong and free, while we negotiate real reductions in the world’s nuclear arsenals and one day, with God’s help, their total elimination. While America’s military strength is important, let me add here that I’ve always maintained that the struggle now going on for the world will never be decided by bombs or rockets, by armies or military might. The real crisis we face today is a spiritual one; at root, it is a test of moral will and faith.

Reagan, Ronald. Address to the National Association of Evangelicals (“Evil Empire Speech”). March 3, 1983. Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan. Courtesy of The Reagan Presidential Library.

Document C

Reagan: “Tear Down This Wall”

Following World War II, the German city of Berlin was divided into zones of occupation. West Germany, occupied by the United States, became democratic, while East Germany came under Soviet control and influence. During the early years of the Cold War, West Berlin was a geographical loophole through which thousands of East Germans fled to the democratic West. In response, the Communist East German authorities built a wall that totally encircled West Berlin. It was thrown up overnight, August 13, 1961. The city became a representation of the Cold War, a division between the democratic West and the Communist East.

President Ronald Reagan’s “Tear Down This Wall” speech marked his visit to the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on June 12, 1987. As Reagan spoke, his words were played to both sides of the Berlin Wall, reaching both East and West Germans.

In the 1950s, Khrushchev [a former leader of the Soviet Union] predicted, “We will bury you.” But in the West today, we see a free world that has achieved a level of prosperity and well-being **unprecedented** [*never happened before*] in all human history. In the Communist world, we see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of health, even want of the most basic kind—too little food. Even today, the Soviet Union still cannot feed itself. After these four decades, then, there stands before the entire world one great and inescapable conclusion: Freedom leads to prosperity. Freedom replaces the ancient hatreds among the nations with **comity** [*courtesy, mutual benefit*] and peace. Freedom is the victor.


And now the Soviets themselves may, in a limited way, be coming to understand the importance of freedom Are these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? . . . We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace.

General Secretary Gorbachev [the current leader of the Soviet Union], if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Reagan, Ronald. Remarks on East-West Relations at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin (“Tear Down This Wall!”). June 12, 1987. Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan. Courtesy of The Reagan Presidential Library.

Lesson 3: The AIDS Epidemic

**The other night
Charlie brought
home a quart of
milk, a loaf of
bread and a case
of AIDS.**



Charlie always felt his bisexual affairs were harmless enough. But Charlie did catch the AIDS virus. That's why his family's at risk. His wife risks losing her husband, and when she has sex with him, her own life. If she becomes pregnant she can pass the AIDS virus to her baby.

Charlie could have protected himself. Saying "No" could have done it, or using a condom.

Right now there's no vaccine for AIDS, and no cure in sight. With what we know today, and with the precautions that can be taken, no one has to come home with a story like Charlie's.

AIDS If you think you can't get it, you're dead wrong.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 1 (718) 485-8111

"The other night Charlie brought home a quart of milk, a loaf of bread and a case of AIDS," 1980s, New York City Department of Health (U.S. National Library of Medicine)

To what extent did the government adequately address the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s?

Homework

“30 Years In, We Are Still Learning from AIDS”

In 1981, the first AIDS outbreak hit the United States. It was a previously unknown disease, and Americans were baffled by the symptoms, which disproportionately affected gay men and minorities.

Read the article “30 Years In, We Are Still Learning From AIDS” by Lawrence K. Altman, M.D., on the New York Times website, published 30 years after the first outbreak.

Document A

America Responds to AIDS

At first, many AIDS prevention and education posters directly targeted the homosexual community, highlighting safe sex with images of same-sex couples. However, many Americans were uncomfortable with the association between AIDS and homosexuality. As a result, Congress, with the support of President Reagan, banned any federal funding for AIDS prevention that directly targeted homosexuality. The America Responds to AIDS campaign, created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ran from 1987 to 1996. The following is a description of the campaign.

From 1987 to 1996, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsored America Responds to AIDS, a multipart public awareness campaign that focused on reaching a wide range of audiences variously defined by identity or behavior, from heterosexual single mothers, to teenagers of all races, to young-adult African Americans, to people who lived in rural areas. The campaign reached millions, becoming a central point in the “everyone is at risk” strategy of AIDS prevention. It suggested that the best way to respond to HIV/AIDS was to engage in honest conversations about risk behaviors, including the potential consequences of multiple partners, unprotected sex, **intravenous** [administered in the vein with a needle] drug use, or any activities that compromised the ability to make a sound, safe judgment.

Not all applauded the effort, however. Some, particularly service providers working with groups with a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, most notably young men who had sex with men and intravenous drug users, saw the campaign as ignoring the particular needs of these communities in favor of supporting individuals who had a low risk of acquiring the disease. While these efforts claimed to reach all Americans, the efforts did not provide necessary outreach and education to those who also needed it.

Surviving & Thriving: AIDS, Politics, and Culture. 2013. U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Document B

“The New Untouchables”

Read the Time magazine subscriber content preview of “The New Untouchables” by Evan Thomas on the Time magazine website.

Document C

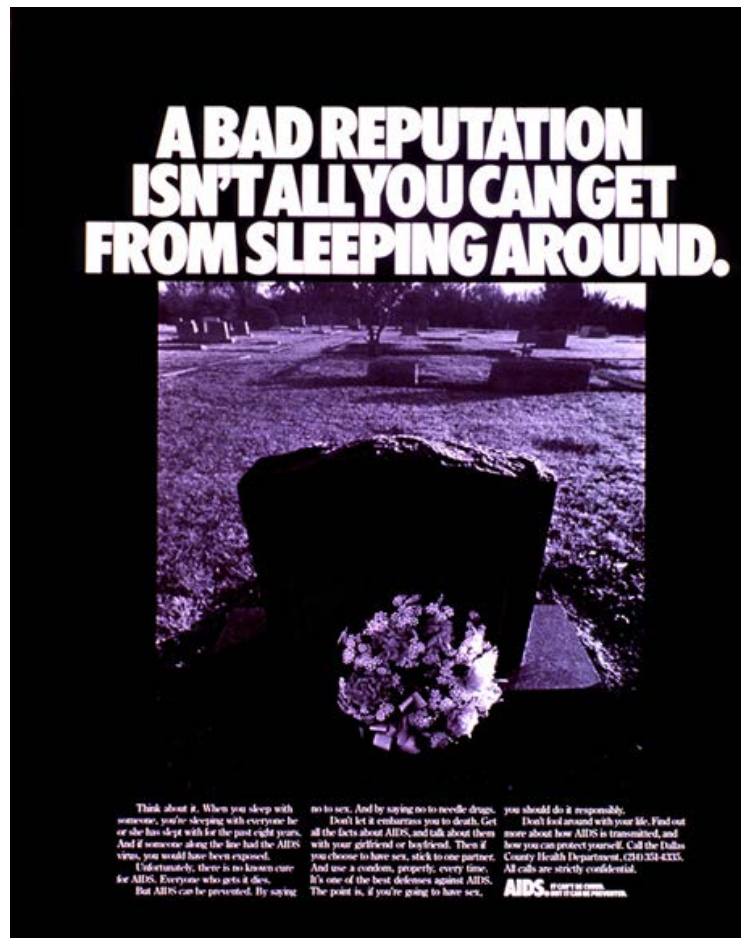
“The Antidote for AIDS Hysteria”

Read the editorial “The Antidote for AIDS Hysteria” by Northwestern University Medical School professor and chief of infectious diseases John Phair on the Chicago Tribune website.

Document D

AIDS Prevention Posters

Many posters were distributed about AIDS during the 1980s. Many of these posters used the fear of AIDS to try to effect change. A lack of information was typical of fear-mongering posters, which relied on catchy, scary headlines rather than information about safe sex, clean needles, or the disease itself.



The caption reads: "Think about it. When you sleep with someone, you're sleeping with everyone he or she has slept with for the past eight years. And if someone along the line had AIDS, you would have been exposed. Unfortunately, there is no known cure for AIDS. Everyone who gets it dies. But AIDS can be prevented. By saying no to sex. And by saying no to needle drugs. Don't let it embarrass you to death. Get all the facts about AIDS, and talk to your girlfriend or boyfriend. Then if you choose to have sex, stick to one partner. And use a condom, properly, every time. It's one of the best defenses against AIDS. The point is, if you're going to have sex, you should do it responsibly. Don't fool around with your life. Find out more about how AIDS is transmitted, and how you can protect yourself. Call the Dallas County Health Department. All calls are strictly confidential." (U.S. National Library of Medicine)

Document E

Vito Russo: “Why We Fight”

In March 1987, New Yorkers formed ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) to join together and combat the stigmatization of and lack of aid provided to Americans with AIDS. Vito Russo, an activist and founding member of ACT UP, delivered the speech “Why We Fight” at a demonstration in Albany, New York, on May 9, 1988. Below is an excerpt from that speech.

You know, for the last three years, since I was diagnosed, my family thinks two things about my situation. One, they think I’m going to die, and two, they think that my government is doing absolutely everything in their power to stop that. And they’re wrong, on both counts.

So, if I’m dying from anything, I’m dying from homophobia. If I’m dying from anything, I’m dying from racism. If I’m dying from anything, it’s from indifference and **red tape** [*rigid conformity to rules*], because these are the things that are preventing an end to this crisis. If I’m dying from anything, I’m dying from **Jesse Helms** [*conservative North Carolina Senator*]. If I’m dying from anything, I’m dying from the President of the United States. And, especially, if I’m dying from anything, I’m dying from the **sensationalism** [*provoking public interest and excitement*] of newspapers and magazines and television shows, which are interested in me, as a human interest story—only as long as I’m willing to be a helpless victim, but not if I’m fighting for my life.

If I’m dying from anything—I’m dying from the fact that not enough rich, white, heterosexual men have gotten AIDS for anybody to give a shit. You know, living with AIDS in this country is like living in the twilight zone. Living with AIDS is like living through a war which is happening only for those people who happen to be in the trenches. Every time a shell explodes, you look around and you discover that you’ve lost more of your friends, but nobody else notices. It isn’t happening to them. They’re walking down the streets as though we weren’t living through some sort of nightmare. And only you can hear the screams of the people who are dying and their cries for help. No one else seems to be noticing.

And it’s worse than a war, because during a war people are united in a shared experience. This war has not united us, it’s divided us. It’s separated those of us with AIDS and those of us who fight for people with AIDS from the rest of the population.

Russo, Vito. “Why We Fight.” May 9, 1988. Courtesy of ACT UP New York.

Lesson 4: The Fall of the Soviet Union



"Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and U.S. President George Bush." Photograph by Yuriy Abramochkin (RIA Novosti Archive, image #330109)

Why did the Soviet Union collapse?

Homework
Fall of the Soviet Union

Read the article “Fall of the Soviet Union” on the History Channel website.

Lesson 5: The Gulf War



Overview of assorted British armored vehicles on firing range, Company C, 1st Battalion, the Staffordshire Regiment (1st [UK] Armoured Division) live fire training exercise, January 6, 1991, by SPC Randall R. Anderson, DS-F-106-04 (XVIII Airborne Corps History Office)

Why did the United States get involved in the Gulf War?

Homework**“Crash Course History: George H.W. Bush, the New World Order, and the Gulf War”**

Watch the video “Crash Course History: George H.W. Bush, The New World Order, and the Gulf War” on YouTube.

Document A
George H. W. Bush's Declaration of War

Here is an excerpt from President George H. W. Bush's declaration of war on Iraq, January 16, 1991, which sparked the Gulf War.

Some may ask: Why act now? Why not wait? The answer is clear: The world could wait no longer. Sanctions, though having some effect, showed no signs of accomplishing their objective. Sanctions were tried for well over five months, and we and our allies concluded that sanctions alone would not force Saddam from Kuwait.

While the world waited, Saddam Hussein systematically raped, pillaged, and plundered a tiny nation, no threat to his own. He subjected the people of Kuwait to unspeakable **atrocities** [*horrible crimes*]*—and among those* **maimed** [*wounded*] and murdered innocent children.

While the world waited, Saddam sought to add to the chemical weapons arsenal he now possesses, an infinitely more dangerous weapon of mass destruction—a nuclear weapon. And while the world waited, while the world talked peace and withdrawal, Saddam Hussein dug in and moved massive forces into Kuwait.

While the world waited, while Saddam stalled, more damage was being done to the fragile economies of the Third World, emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, to the entire world, including to our own economy

While the world waited, Saddam Hussein met every overture of peace with open contempt. While the world prayed for peace, Saddam prepared for war. ...

Regrettably, we now believe that only force will make him leave.

*Bush, George H. W. Address to the Nation on the Invasion of Iraq. January 16, 1991.
Courtesy of National Archives.*

Document B

“Why the Gulf War Served the National Interest”

Read the section “Defining the National Interest” and the first three paragraphs from the “The Case of the Gulf” in the article “Why the Gulf War Served the National Interest” by political scientist Joseph Nye on The Atlantic website.

Document C

The Munich Analogy

In 1990, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded the nation of Kuwait. Many American politicians and media outlets compared Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait to Hitler’s invasion of the Sudetenland during World War II. Known as the “Munich analogy,” the claims these politicians and journalists made alleged that non-action in the face of Iraqi aggression was comparable to European appeasement of Hitler.



This political cartoon from the Gulf War shows Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator, with a miniature Hitler on his shoulder, whispering “... And then, if they still do nothing, you gobble up another neighbor..!” (www.geoffhook.com)

Document D

Letter to President Bush from a Marine's Father

Read the open letter sent by Alex Molnar, a soldier's father and founder of the Military Families Support Network, to President Bush, which was published in the New York Times on August 23, 1990. The letter is available on pages 544–546 of Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove's collection, Voices of a People's History of the United States (Seven Stories Press: 2009).

Document E

June Jordan Rally Speech

June Jordan, a black feminist writer and activist, spoke out against the Gulf War at a rally in Hayward, California, on February 21, 1991, the anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X.

Tonight, February 21, 1991, when yet again, the ruling white men of America despise peace and sneer at negotiations and intensify their **arms-length arm-chair** [unqualified] prosecution of this evil war, this display of racist value system that will never allow for any nationalism that is not their own and that will never allow third world countries to control their own natural resources and that will never, ever express—let alone feel—regret or remorse or shame or horror at the loss of any human life that is not white. Tonight, I am particularly proud to be an African American. By launching the heaviest air assault in history against Iraq on January 15, George Bush dared to [dishonor] the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tonight, and 83,000 bombing missions later, is the 26th anniversary of the assassination of Malcolm X. On this sorry evening, the world has seen the [obsessive] real deal behind the **sanctimonious** [preachy, hypocritical] rhetoric of Bush and Company. The Persian Gulf War is not about Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The is not about Kuwait at all

Confronted with the nightmare prospect of peace, Bush ... will be damned if he will acknowledge that Saddam Hussein is a man, is the head of a **sovereign** [independent] state, is an enemy to be reckoned with, an opponent with whom one must negotiate. Saddam is not a white man. He and his Arab peoples must be destroyed. No peace, no cease-fire, no negotiations.

I am proud tonight to remember Dr. King and Malcolm X and to mourn their actions even as I pursue the difficult challenge of their legacy. Both of these men became the targets of white wrath when they in their different ways developed into global visionaries persisting against racism in Alabama, in Harlem, in South Africa, in Vietnam. Neither of these men could have failed to condemn this current attack against the Arab world. Neither of these men ever [accepted] anything less than equal justice and equal rights.

Hence, the undeniably racist double standards now [imposed] against Saddam Hussein would have appalled and **alienated** [isolated] both of them completely.

*Jordan, June. Speech at "Poets and Politicians Against the War." February 21, 1991.
Courtesy of DemocracyNow.org*

Lesson 6: The Evolution of the American Workforce



Office cubicles at the headquarters building of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, or WSSC. Photograph by Carol Highsmith, 1980 (Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs Division)

**Why did the American workforce
evolve in the 1980s and 1990s?**

Homework

The Evolution of the American Workforce

The following text was adapted from the essay “Facing the New Millennium” by Michael Flamm, published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

On the eve of the millennium, the United States was changing in many significant ways. Technology was transforming how information and ideas were transmitted and consumed. Americans now had more entertainment options than ever before, but some worried that it was making politics more divided and families less strong. Meanwhile, science was providing breakthroughs in genetics, offering new medical treatments.

Immigration

During the 1980s and 1990s, the population of the United States increased significantly. But it was not the result of another baby boom, similar to what had happened in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, the birth rate declined substantially after the 1970s. Instead, better medical treatment and improved life expectancy led to a large expansion in the number of elderly, whose political influence grew. Yet the major source of population growth was immigration, both legal and illegal. Between 1970 and 2000, an estimated 28 million immigrants — 21 million legal and 7 million illegal — arrived in the United States, doubling the percentage of foreign born from 4.7 percent to 10.4 percent. The wave of immigration after 1970 was the largest in the 20th century and altered the face of America. Indeed, if current trends continue, it is likely that by 2050, white Americans of European ancestry will constitute less than 50 percent of the total population.

Two groups — Latinos and Asians — were most responsible for this development. Immigrants from Latin America — and Mexico in particular — constituted a majority share of both legal and illegal immigrants. By 2000, Latinos were the largest single ethnic group in the United States, although they were also a diverse “group,” since Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Dominicans, and Mexicans often had little in common except for their language. The same was true of Asian immigrants, who in the 1980s and 1990s made up almost 50% of the legal newcomers. Again, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, and Filipino immigrants had little in common except for their region of origin. But by 2000, there were twice as many Asians in the United States as in 1985. Like Latinos, they were concentrated in states on the coasts and in the Southwest. California’s population, for example, was 27% foreign-born by 2000. Not surprisingly, immigration was increasingly a hot political issue in those parts of the United States.

Technology

While the impact of immigration was focused in specific regions, the impact of technology was everywhere. By 2000 the world in which most Americans lived had undergone a dramatic change from earlier decades. The rise of the personal computer in the 1980s transformed the workplace. In the 1990s, the emergence of the Internet, a network of computers, further revolutionized both public and private life. Originally developed by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) in the Department of Defense, the so-called “ARPANET” had a total of 23 users by 1971. 30 years later, after the federal government had withdrawn from the project for security reasons, the ARPANET had become the Internet and had an estimated 625 million users, including more than 180 million in the United States alone. It is difficult to overstate the impact of this development—in less than 10 years, the Internet revolutionized communication and commerce as email and online browsing displaced letter writing and window-shopping.

Flamm, Michael, Facing the New Millennium. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Group 1: The Computer Revolution
Document A
Machine of the Year

On January 3, 1983, the personal computer was named Time magazine's "Machine of the Year" (normally, the award was given to a prominent man or woman). Read the article "A New World Dawns," praising the possibilities of the personal computer, on the Time magazine website.

Document B
The Internet

In the 1960s, the federal government had scientists build the ARPANET, a way to connect military networks and send information from one computer to another. By the 1980s, networks grew, and the use of what became known as the Internet began to grow, and more and more people—mainly researchers and academics—used the Internet to send files back and forth. In 1991, the World Wide Web was invented, which allowed people to be interconnected through a digital "web," using the Internet to search for and find information, as well as communicate with one another. In 1992, the first web browser—Mosaic—was invented, which allowed users to search the Internet to read text, view images, and click links.

Watch the newsreel This Is What the Internet Looked Like in the 1990s on the NBC News website.

Document C
The Information Highway

In 1995, Bill Gates wrote a book titled The Road Ahead in which he predicted how the Internet would change the nature of the economy. Below is an excerpt about the "information highway."

The internet will extend the electronic marketplace and become the ultimate go-between, the universal middleman. Often the only humans involved in a transaction will be the actual buyer and the seller. All the goods for sale in the world will be available for you to examine, compare, and often, customize. When you want to buy something, you'll be able to tell your computer to find it for you at the best price offered by any acceptable source or ask your computer to "**haggle**" [*bargain*] with the computers of various sellers. Information about vendors and their products and services will be available to any computer connected to the network. Servers distributed worldwide will accept bids, resolve offers into completed transactions, control **authentication** [*verifying the truth of*] and security, and handle all other aspects of the marketplace, including the transfer of funds. This will carry us into a new world of **low-friction** [*low resistance*], **low-overhead** [*low business costs*] capitalism, in which market information will be plentiful and transaction costs low. It will be a shopper's heaven.

Gates, Bill. The Road Ahead. 1996. Penguin Books, pg. 181.

Group 2: Immigration
Document A
Immigration Timeline

- 1965:** Congress removes nationality quotas from the Immigration Act. In its place, the act limits immigration to 170,000 immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere and 120,000 immigrants from the Western Hemisphere.
- 1978:** Congress replaces the hemisphere limits and instead institutes an immigration limit of 290,000 immigrants per year, regardless of origin.
- 1980:** Congress passes the Refugee Act, defining refugees as those fleeing persecution and empowering the president to decide the annual limit on refugees.
- 1986:** Congress passes the Immigration Reform and Control Act, raising the immigration limit to 540,000 immigrants per year. The law also allows illegal immigrants who have lived in the United States since 1982 to receive official pardon and remain in the United States.
- 1990:** Congress passes the Immigration Act of 1990, again raising the annual limit to 700,000 immigrants for 1992 through 1994, and then 675,000 immigrants per year afterward. Immigrants may no longer be denied entry to the United States based on their political beliefs or affiliations.
- 1996:** Congress doubles the U.S. Border Patrol to 10,000 agents over five years and builds fences at select parts of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Data retrieved from PBS.org.

Document B
The Legacy of the Immigration Reform and Control Act

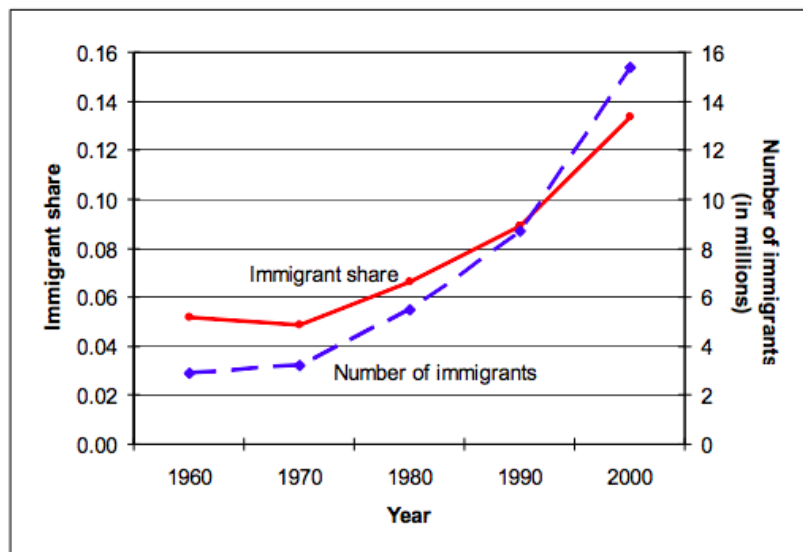
Read the article “Looking Back at Amnesty Under Reagan” by Caroline Mimbs Nyce and Chris Bodenner on the Atlantic website.

Document C

Immigrants in the Workforce

As an increasing number of immigrants arrived in the United States, more and more of these immigrants entered the American workforce. The skill composition of the immigrant population—and, particularly, how the skills of immigrant workers compares to those of native workers—is the key determinant of the economic impact of immigration on the United States. Unskilled immigrants will typically affect the job markets of unskilled natives, while skilled immigrants will affect the job markets of skilled natives. Skilled immigrants might also assimilate more quickly. They might be more adept at learning the tools and “tricks of the trade” that can increase the chances of economic success. Finally, the relative skills of immigrants determine the economic benefits from immigration. The United States benefits from international trade because it can import goods that are not available or are too expensive to produce in the domestic market. Similarly, the country benefits from immigration because it can import workers with scarce qualifications and abilities.

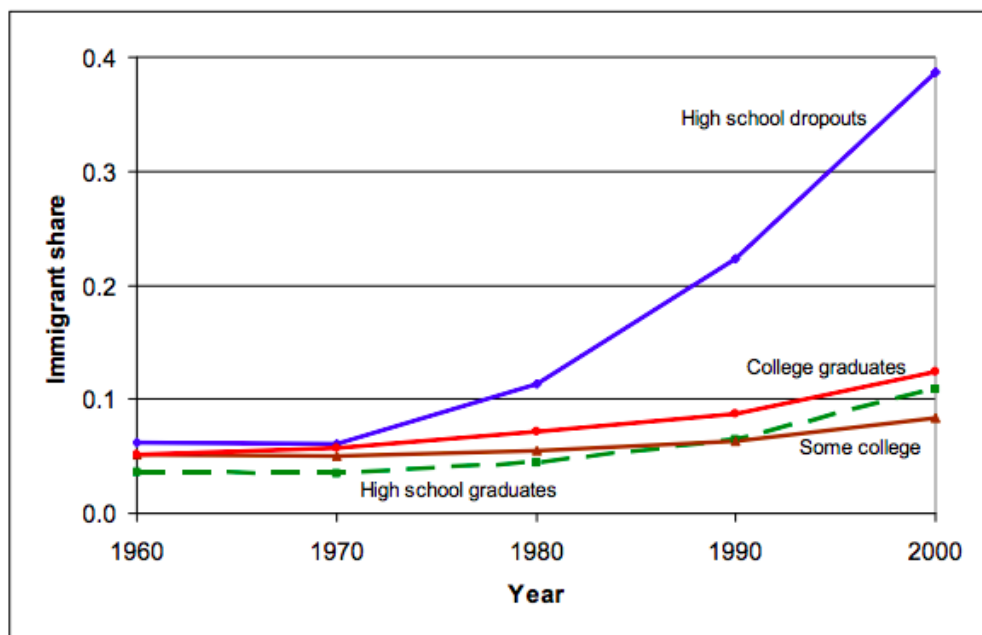
Figure 1. Immigration and the Workforce, 1960–2000



Notes: The workforce is defined as the group of persons aged 18 to 64 who are not enrolled in school and who worked in the civilian sector at least 1 week in the year prior to each decennial census.

The graph above illustrates the number of immigrants arriving to the United States as compared to the percentage of immigrants entering the American workforce. (Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.)

Figure 3. The Immigrant Share in the Workforce, By Educational Attainment



Notes: The workforce is defined as the group of persons aged 18 to 64 who are not enrolled in school and who worked in the civilian sector at least 1 week in the year prior to each decennial census.

The higher the education level, the more likely an immigrant is a “skilled” laborer entering the workforce, whereas the lower the education level, the more likely the immigrant is an “unskilled” laborer entering the workforce. (Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.)

Group 3: Gender Roles in the Workforce
Document A
Shifting Gender Roles

Read the article “Study Finds Women Gaining in Pay, Education, Entrepreneurship” by Jeff Glasser on the Washington Post website.

Document B
Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993

Despite the increased participation of women in the workforce in the 1980s and 1990s, discrimination and societal pressures and gender norms still prohibited many women from entering the workforce. Significantly more women than men left the workforce to become stay-at-home parents once couples had children. This, coupled with the unequal workforce pay of women (and even more unequal pay of minority women), made succeeding in the workforce difficult. Even so, by the 1990s, women, once limited to jobs as secretaries, teachers, and nurses, now could enter many more industries. On February 5, 1993, Congress passed the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. Facing the growing trend of women entering the workforce and the mounting struggles for these women, this act attempted to foster the growth of the workforce by making it easier to work parenting.

FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

1. the number of single-parent households and two-parent households in which the single parent or both parents work is increasing significantly;
2. it is important for the development of children and the family unit that fathers and mothers be able to participate in early childrearing and the care of family members who have serious health conditions;
3. the lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting;
4. there is inadequate job security for employees who have serious health conditions that prevent them from working for temporary periods;
5. due to the nature of the roles of men and women in our society, the primary responsibility for family caretaking often falls on women, and such responsibility affects the working lives of women more than it affects the working lives of men;
6. employment standards that apply to one gender only have serious potential for encouraging employers to discriminate against employees and applicants for employment who are of that gender.

PURPOSES.—It is the purpose of this Act—

- to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity;
- to entitle employees to take reasonable leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- to accomplish the purposes described in paragraphs (1) and (2) in a manner that accommodates the legitimate interests of employers;
- to accomplish the purposes described in paragraphs (1) and (2) in a manner that, consistent with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, minimizes the potential for employment discrimination on the basis of sex by ensuring generally that leave is available for eligible medical reasons (including maternity-related disability) and for compelling family reasons, on a gender-neutral basis; and
- to promote the goal of equal employment opportunity for women and men, pursuant to such clause.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. February 5, 1993. United States Department of Labor.

Document C

Gender Statistics in the Workforce

The following is an excerpt from the report “A Century of Change: the U.S. Labor Force, 1950–2050,” published in the Monthly Labor Review, May 2002.

Among the factors that have contributed to the growth and development of the U.S. labor force, none has been as pronounced as the rise in the participation of women in the labor force. In the two decades after World War II, the U.S. economy enjoyed a major expansion, coupled with increases in productivity, higher standards of living, and rapid acceleration in the growth of college enrollments. Rapid economic growth vastly increased the demand for labor. The Civil Rights Movement, legislation promoting equal opportunity in employment, and the women’s rights movement created an atmosphere that was hospitable to more women working outside the home. The combination of all these factors created strong incentives for women to join the workforce, significantly affecting their participation rate.

The dramatic increase in the labor force participation rates of women during the period was accompanied by many other social, economic, and demographic changes in the status of women:

- Women remained single more often.
- Of those who married, many did so later in life, and the median age at first marriage increased substantially.
- Women elected to stay in school longer, achieving higher educational attainment than in the past and pursuing better paying careers.
- Women postponed childbirth to older ages and had fewer children than in previous decades. As a result of improved child care, women tended to enter the labor force even before their children started school, and they were able to maintain a longer job tenure than in previous periods.
- Women got divorced more often; this in itself increased their labor force participation rate.

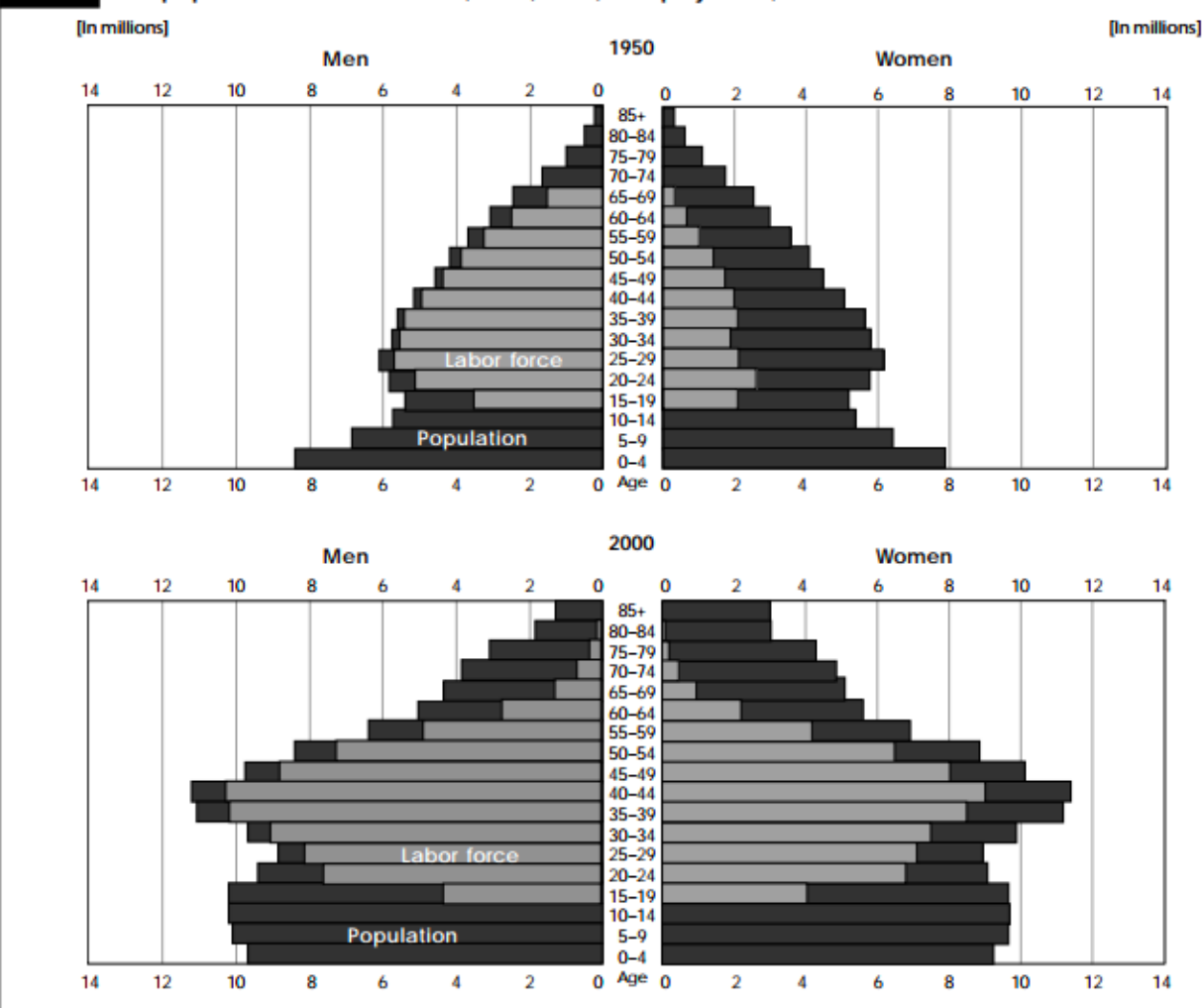
*Toossi, Miltra. “A century of change: the U.S. labor force, 1950-2050.” May 2002.
Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review.*

Document D

Gender Statistics in the Workforce Graphs

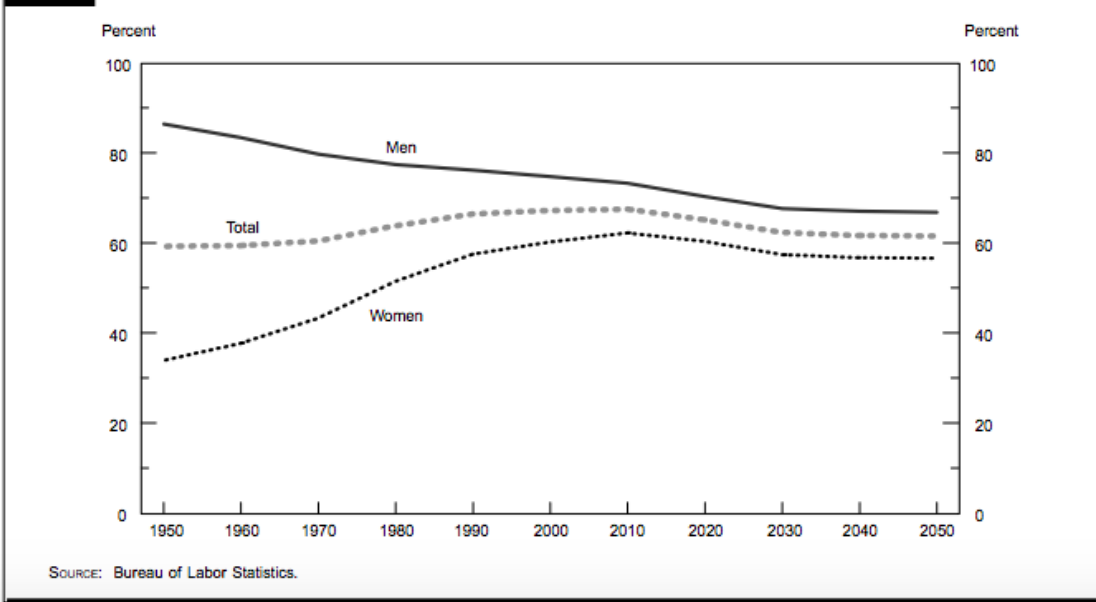
The following are graphs from an excerpt of the report “A Century of Change: the U.S. Labor Force, 1950–2050,” published in the Monthly Labor Review, May 2002. These graphs compare the population of men and women over time in comparison with changes in the workforce over time.

Chart 1. U.S. population and labor force, 1950, 2000, and projected, 2050



The table compares population growth and labor force growth between men and women from 1950 to 2000. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Chart 2. Aggregate labor force participation rates, 1950–2000 and projected to 2050



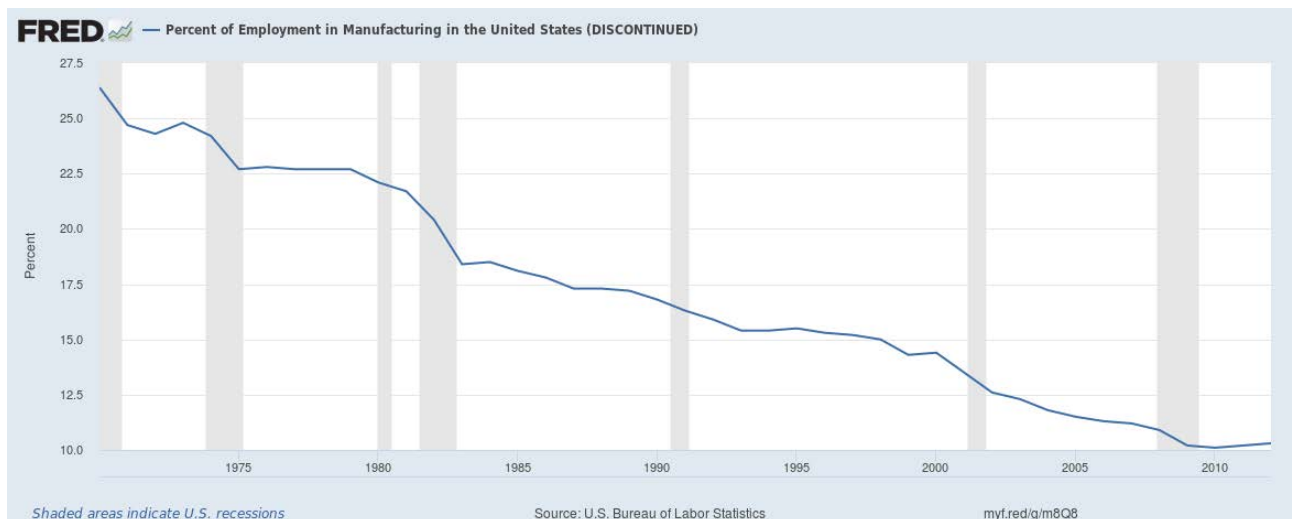
The table compares the labor participation percentage rate between men and women over time (including projected participation rate up until the year 2050). (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Group 4: Changes in Industry

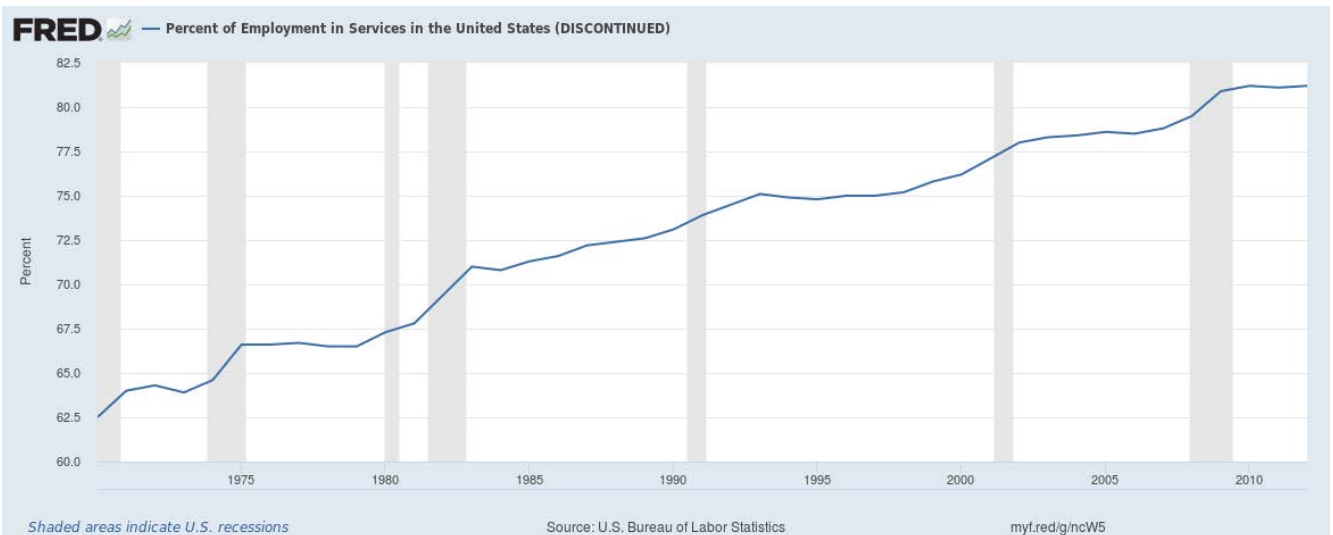
Document A

Service Industries vs. Manufacturing

Service jobs range from working in shops or restaurants to providing services as a lawyer. Manufacturing jobs, which increased significantly during the Industrial Revolution and the Gilded Age, are generally factory work and entail the creation of physical goods to be sold.



The graph above shows the percentage of Americans employed in the manufacturing industry between 1970 and 201. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)



The graph above shows the percentage of Americans employed in the services industry between 1970 and 2012. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Document B

“The 1980s: Job Growth and Industry Shifts”

Lois M. Plunkert worked with the Bureau of Labor Statistics and published the report “The 1980s: A Decade of Job Growth and Industry Shifts” in the Monthly Labor Review’s September 1990 issue. The following is an excerpt of this report.

The 1980s began with two recessions in three years and then posted the longest peace-time expansion on record. Although growth did slow as the decade came to a close, the service section still added large numbers of jobs month after month.

Not all industries experienced the prosperity of the 1980s. Many manufacturing and mining industries never recovered from the two recessions; others recovered their production levels but did so with fewer workers. Growth also was uneven within service industries: One new job in four was in business or health services, while some service industries even lost jobs; -notably, communications, railroads, and water transportation. Other industries, such as finance and special construction trades, that showed strong growth for most of the 10-year period, were experiencing job losses or slow growth at the end of the decade. As a result of the interaction of job gains and losses among industries, the 1980s witnessed the shifting of another 6% of employment from the goods-producing to the service-producing industries. Just over three-fourths of all jobs are now in the service industry.

This continued shift of jobs into the service industry was not at the expense of manufacturing output, which remained at about 23 percent over the decade, while factory jobs dropped from 23 percent to 18 percent of employment. During the two recessions early in the decade, many **marginal** [*minor importance*] jobs were eliminated throughout the economy. Marginal plants were closed down, some permanently. With the start of the recovery in 1983, industry began to take on a **leaner** [*slimmer*] look. In an effort to compete in a worldwide market, many factories were modernized during the 1980s, with more and better machines enhancing workers’ output. At the same time, the size of the labor force increased: Not only did the working-age population grow by 21.5 million, but a larger percentage of women entered the job market. As a result, women’s participation in the labor force increased from 51 percent to 57 percent over the decade.

With labor plentiful, factory jobs scarce, and many companies in financial trouble, some labor unions agreed to reductions in wages or benefits. Others agreed to continue the **status quo** [*the existing state of affairs*] until conditions improved. Labor’s recommendations for more cost-effective methods of production played an important part in the turnaround in many companies.

Plunkert, Lois M. “The 1980s: A Decade of Job Growth and Industry Shifts.” September 1990. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Monthly Labor Review.

Document C

Labor vs. Business

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, unions became more diversified and saw success during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. However, in the 1970s, economic downturns and changes to the workforce caused unions to weaken. Reagan's administration did not support unions, leading to a decline in union membership by five million workers by the end of his presidency. Doug Fraser was the president of the United Automobile Workers (UAW) union. In 1978, Fraser resigned from the Labor-Management Group, a committee formed by Secretary of Labor John Dunlop and made up of eight corporate executives and eight labor officials. The goal of the committee was to bring companies and labor together. The following is an excerpt of his resignation letter.

The acceptance of the labor movement, such as it has been, came because business feared the alternatives. Corporate America didn't join the fight to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Voting Rights Act, but it eventually accepted the **inevitability** [*certain to happen*] of that legislation. Other similar pieces of legislation aimed at the human needs of the disadvantaged have become national policy only after real struggle.

This system is not as it should be, yet progress has been made under it. But today, I am convinced there has been a shift on the part of the business community toward confrontation, rather than cooperation. Now, business groups are tightening their control over American society. As that grip tightens, it is the "have-nots" who are squeezed.

The latest breakdown in our relationship is also perhaps the most serious. The fight waged by the business community against the Labor Law Reform bill—a proposed bill that would increase penalties for companies who violate their worker's right to organize—stands as the most vicious, unfair attack upon the labor movement in more than 30 years. Labor law reform itself would not have organized a single worker. Rather, it would have begun to limit the ability of certain rogue employers to keep workers from choosing democratically to be represented by unions through employer delay and outright violation of existing labor law

I cannot sit [here] seeking unity with the leaders of American industry, while they try to destroy us and ruin the lives of the people I represent. I would rather sit with the rural poor, the desperate children of urban **blight** [*disease*], the victims of racism, and working people seeking a better life than with those whose religion is the **status quo** [*existing state of affairs*], whose goal is profit and whose hearts are cold. We in the UAW intend to make new links with those who believe in struggle: the kind of people who sat down in the factories in the 1930s and who marched in Selma in the 1960s.

Fraser, Douglas. Resignation letter from the Labor-Management Group. July 17, 1978.

Lessons 7–9: The Clinton Presidency



President Bill Clinton. Photograph by Bob McNeely (White House)

**To what extent was Clinton's presidency
a time of national prosperity?**

Homework

The Clinton Presidency

The following text is adapted from historian Michael Flamm's essay "Facing the New Millennium."

George H. W. Bush served as president for only one term. Despite Bush's foreign policy successes and the end of the Cold War, Democrat Bill Clinton defeated him in the election of 1992. Bill Clinton, a Democrat from Arkansas, entered the White House with the United States in a recession, but the economy quickly recovered and raced through the remainder of the decade. From 1994 to 2000 it grew—sometimes substantially—in every quarter of every year. It was the greatest peacetime economic expansion in American history. Inflation was minimal, with rising wages for individuals and profits for companies. In 1997, the federal government achieved the first budget **surplus** [*making more money than what is spent*] in 30 years, and in 1998, unemployment fell to the lowest level in 20 years. Meanwhile, the stock market reached new highs.

The main cause of the economic boom remains a matter of debate. Republicans contend that it was the tax cuts of the Reagan years that laid the foundation for the prosperity. Democrats assert that it was Clinton's commitment to reduced deficits and free trade, symbolized by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Others point to the impact of personal computers, which spurred productivity in the workplace and kept inflation in check even as wages rose. And still others note that energy costs remained low and stable, as they had in the 1980s. With the spread of globalization, many U.S. companies were able to reduce labor costs by lowering wages or shifting plants and production overseas.

The gains of the 1990s, like those of the 1980s, were unevenly distributed. While great fortunes were made by wealthy individuals, great struggles were experienced by the bottom 20% of Americans, whose income fell in the 1980s and 1990s. With the loss of manufacturing jobs, education became a critical factor in how individuals fared in the "new economy"—the income of high school graduates fell, while the income of college graduates rose. By 1999, the earnings ratio of the average employer to the average employee was 420:1, whereas in 1980 the ratio was only 42:1.

Clinton and the Democrats in Congress enjoyed a fair number of legislative successes in 1993. In addition to reaching a deal to raise taxes and reducing spending, they were able to impose a ban on the sale of **assault rifles** [*military-level guns*] (a significant victory for gun-control advocates) and enact the Family and Medical Leave Act, which entitled some workers to unpaid leave for childbirth, adoption, or family medical emergencies. The White House also eased abortion restrictions and protected wilderness areas. Clinton and Congress raised the minimum wage, expanded the student-loan program, and created AmeriCorps, a program intended to give students of all ages a chance to earn money for their college or graduate education through community service. Finally, the administration offered tax credits to the working poor, which eventually benefited tens of millions of families. It was one of the most important anti-poverty measures since the 1960s.

These substantial achievements were diminished by the health care disaster, the great failure of Clinton's first term. Faced with rising numbers of uninsured Americans and increasing medical costs, the President asked First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to lead a group to design a plan for affordable health care. Meeting in private and without input from Congress, she put together a complex and ambitious proposal that conservative critics and insurance industry supporters argued would lead to higher taxes, decreased care, and less choice of treatment or doctors for consumers. As a result, the measure was dead on arrival in Congress.

In 1994, Republicans gained control of Congress for the first time since 1954 and had a budget showdown with President Clinton that led to a government shutdown. Congressional Republicans soon found, however, that the public blamed them for the conflict more than they blamed the president. The following year, a terrible tragedy boosted Clinton's popularity; white supremacists detonated a truck bomb next to a federal building in Oklahoma City. The explosion killed more than 140 government employees—as well as 19 children and babies in a day-care center next to the rental truck's parking spot. In a powerful and moving speech, Clinton declared that the bombing was “an act of cowardice and it was evil.” Americans agreed, and many began to disapprove of the more extreme anti-government language of conservatives in Congress.

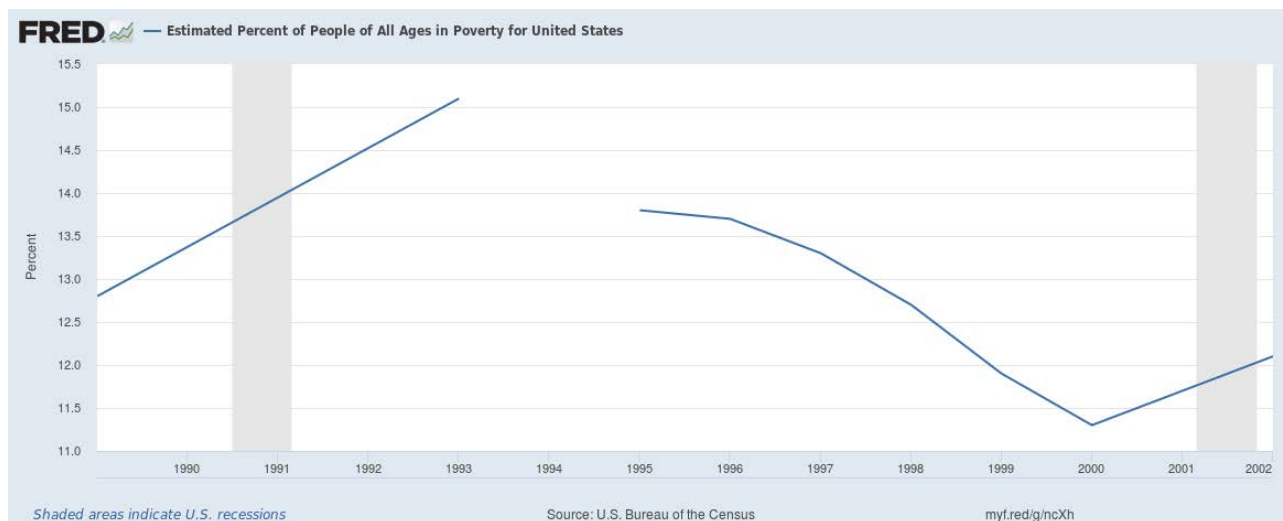
In the fall of 1996, the president easily won reelection, although the Republicans held their control of Congress. Two years later, Kenneth Starr, a former official in the Justice Department during the Reagan years, released a report detailing Clinton's affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. As a result, Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to approve two articles of impeachment (for **perjury** [*lying under oath*] and **obstruction of justice** [*blocking legal investigation*]) related to Clinton's effort to conceal his sexual relationship with the young woman. The matter next moved to the Senate, where the first trial of a president since Andrew Johnson in 1868 took place. In the end, the trial ruled Clinton innocent. Republicans were unable to gain a simple majority, let alone the two-thirds margin needed for a conviction. Nevertheless, the scandal distracted Clinton and consumed the last two years of his term.

Flamm, Michael, Facing the New Millennium. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Document A

Poverty Rates in the 1990s

During Clinton's presidency, the workforce grew. The graph below illustrates the impact of a growing economy on poverty in the United States.



This graph illustrates the estimated percentage of people living in poverty in the United States. Note that no federal data was available for the years between 1993 and 1995. Clinton entered office in January 1993 and left office in January 2001. (Bureau of Labor Statistics)

The text below was published in a policy brief by H. Luke Shaefer and Kathryn Edin for the National Poverty Center about extreme poverty (defined as living on \$2 or less per day) in the United States.

[Researchers estimate that] as of the beginning of 2011, about 1.46 million U.S. households with about 2.8 million children were surviving on \$2 or less in income per person per day in a given month. This constitutes almost 20 percent of all nonelderly households with children living in poverty. About 866,000 households appear to live in extreme poverty across a full calendar quarter. The prevalence of extreme poverty rose sharply between 1996 and 2011. This growth has been concentrated among those groups that were most affected by the 1996 welfare reform [put in place by President Clinton].

Shaefer, H. Luke and Kathryn Edin. "Extreme Poverty in the United States, 1996 to 2011." February 2012. National Poverty Center, Policy Brief 28.

Document B

Bill Clinton's Speech on Welfare Reform

The following is an excerpt from a speech Bill Clinton gave announcing a welfare reform bill he signed on August 22, 1996.

Today we have a historic opportunity to make welfare what it was meant to be: a second chance, not a way of life

I made my principles for real welfare reform very clear from the beginning. First and foremost, it should be about moving people from welfare to work. It should impose time limits on welfare. It should give people the child care and the health care they need to move from welfare to work without hurting their children. It should crack down on child-support enforcement, and it should protect our children

First, the new bill is strong on work. It provides \$4 billion more for child care so that mothers can move from welfare to work and protects their children by maintaining health and safety standards for day care

It gives states powerful performance incentives to place people in jobs. It requires states to hold up their end of the bargain by maintaining their own spending on welfare. And it gives states the capacity to create jobs by taking money now used for welfare checks and giving it to employers as income **subsidies** [*government money to support a business*], as an incentive to hire people, or being used to create community service jobs.

Second, this new bill . . . allows states to use federal money to provide vouchers to children whose parents can't find work after the time limits expire. And it preserves the national guarantee of health care for poor children, the disabled, pregnant women, the elderly, and people on welfare.

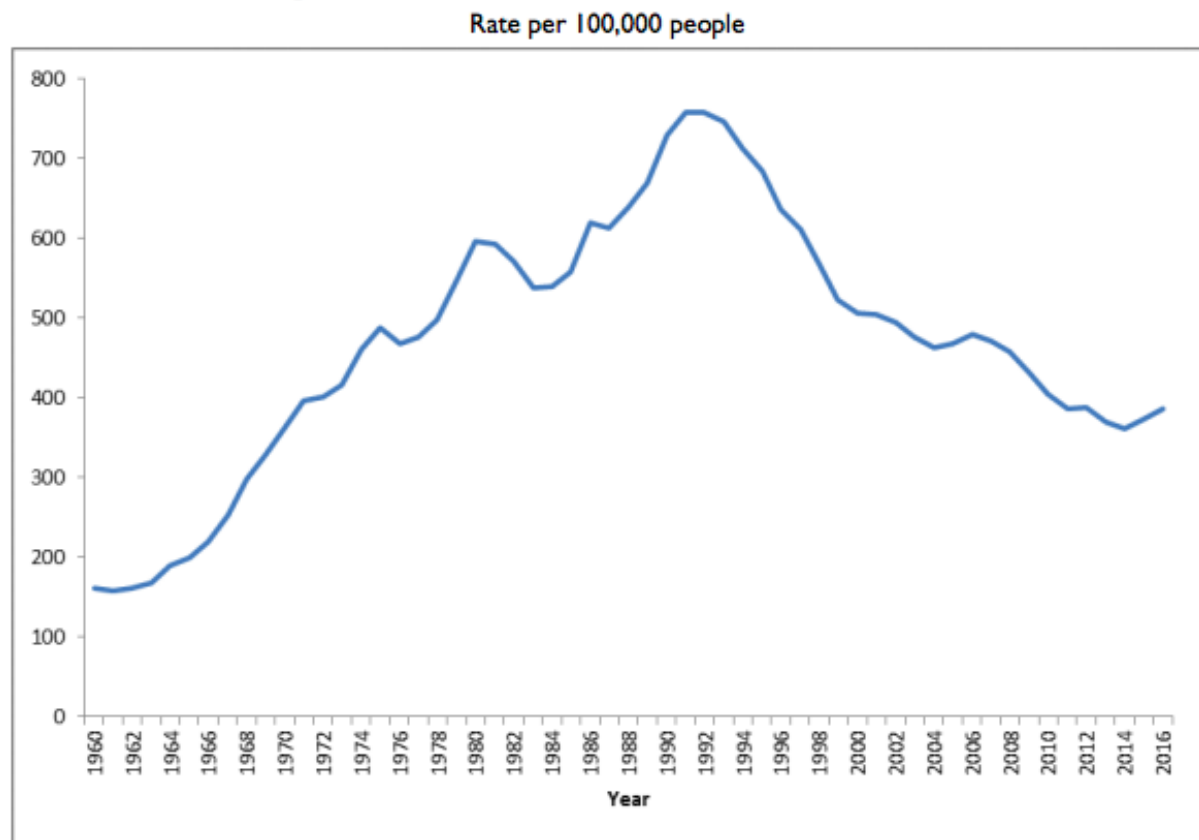
Clinton, Bill. Announcement on Welfare Legislation. August 1, 1996. Courtesy of The New York Times.

Document C

Murder Rates and Mass Incarceration

In 1994, President Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, the most significant crime bill to be passed in U.S. history. The act expanded the death penalty and instituted a “three strikes” policy, which ensured that three-time repeat offenders, regardless of the crime, received a life sentence in prison. The bill funded the construction of new prisons, hired new police, and created new crime-prevention programs. The two graphs below illustrate the correlation between the passage of the act and rates of crime and mass incarceration in the United States.

Figure 1. National Violent Crime Rate, 1960-2016

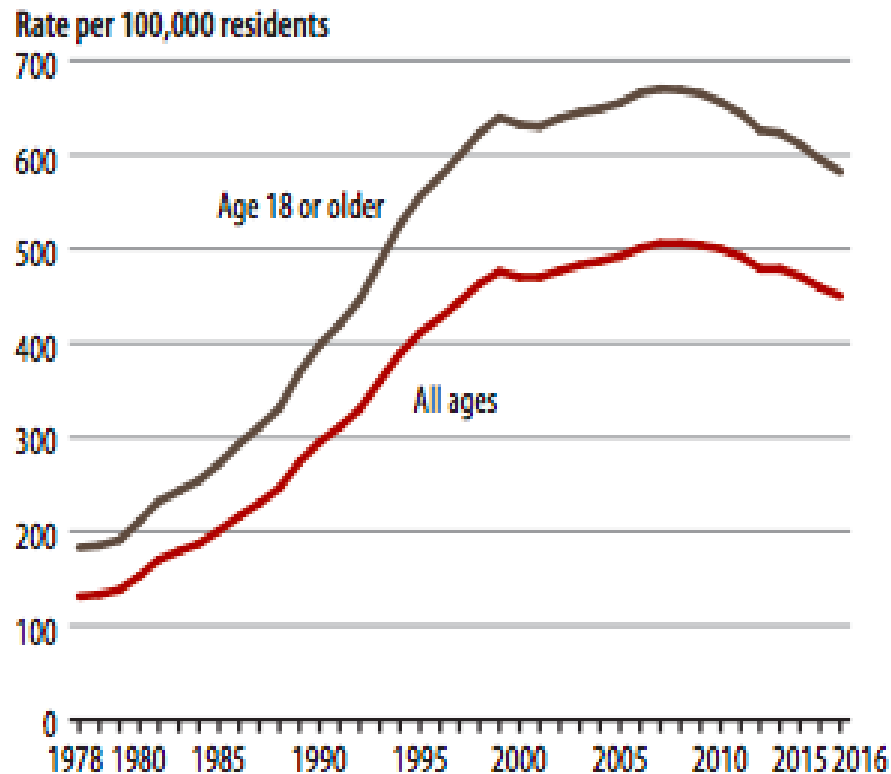


Source: Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, Table 3.106.2012; Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States 2016*, Table 1.

Notes: The violent crime rate includes the total number of reported homicides, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults per 100,000 people. Violent crime rates for 1960-2016 include data using the “legacy” rape definition. See the text box on “UCR Offense Definitions” for more details.

*This graph illustrates the rate of violent crime in the United States between 1960 and 2012.
(Congressional Research Service)*

Imprisonment rate of sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, per 100,000 U.S. residents, 1978–2016



Note: Jurisdiction refers to the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials over a prisoner, regardless of where the prisoner is held. Counts are based on prisoners with sentences of more than 1 year.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Prisoner Statistics, 1978–2016; and U.S. Census Bureau, postcensal resident population estimates for January 1 of the following calendar year.

*This graph represents the rate of imprisonment of Americans — of all ages, and exclusively adults — in the United States between 1978 and 2016.
(U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics)*

Document D
Impeachment

Read the article “Impeachment: The Legacy” by David Rosenbaum on the New York Times website.